

1a. Church Council

The Church Council meets on a monthly basis to:

- address current issues of the church,
- lead the congregation in establishing short-term and long-term priorities for the church, and
- coordinate the activities of its represented elected committees toward those priorities.

As stipulated by the Plymouth Church constitution, these meetings are open to all members of the congregation, although only council members are entitled to vote. Allowance of comments by church members at council meetings shall be at the discretion of the Council Moderator.

The primary focus of Church Council is to address issues that extend beyond the scope of its member committees, while empowering the committees as much as possible to deal with issues within their scope. To this end, it is expected that all issues that fall into the scope of one of the elected committees are first discussed by that committee and are brought to council only at the discretion of the Council Representative or the Council Moderator. Council approval is required to extend formal sponsorship by Plymouth Church for activities in the community.

These operating procedures are recommended to support smooth handling of Council business:

- Summarize the minutes of the previous meeting for the current month's Placard and post on the Bulletin Board. Send the full minutes of the current month's meeting to Council Members by the Sunday before the next Council meeting.
- Submit new business agenda items by Monday the week before Council to the Moderator. Agenda items may added at the meeting at the discretion of the Moderator.
- Council members should check email AND their folders before the meeting.
- Committee Council Reps are responsible for updating council members of their committees work each month.
- Assign agenda items to the consent agenda where it is expected to be ready agreement.
- Special meetings should be called if a critical issue must be addressed between regularly scheduled council meetings. Voting by email should not be done as it denies the Council the benefit of meaningful debate and denies members of Plymouth the opportunity to participate.

Church Council is responsible for overseeing the budget planning process and presenting a proposed budget at the Annual Meeting. As stipulated by Church Policy, budget expenditures over \$1000 require council approval, except for the Trustees, who require approval for expenditures over \$5000 (with senior minister or moderator approval for expenditures over \$2000). while all those that are smaller require only the authorization of an elected official with budget authority and need not be reviewed at council meetings.

It is helpful if at least once a year the council convenes for an extended meeting (retreat) to build fellowship among its members and to provide longer-term planning that is often difficult in the normal monthly meetings.

Revised ~~December 8~~February 14, 2006, 2003

Interim appointments to Council Committees should be reported to the Council at the next Council meeting. This will create a formal record of the change in membership of the committee and ensure interested members of Plymouth receive notification through the published Council minutes.